

Remarks/Arguments:

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in light of the present amendments and following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-12 are pending; Claims 1-6, 8, 10, and 12 are amended; and no claims are newly added or canceled herewith. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter is added by this amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 10-12 were objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.85(c); Claims 1, 3, 7, and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kawaguchi et al. (JP 2000-148297, hereafter Kawaguchi) in view of Leung et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,469,449, hereafter Leung); and Claims 2, 4-6, and 8 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication that Claims 2, 4-6, and 8 contain allowable subject matter. In a telephone interview on December 9, 2003, Applicants' representative clarified that Claims 2, 4, and 5 are allowed, as these claims are in independent form. Applicants' representative further clarified that Claim 6 is objected to, but contains allowable subject matter, and that Claim 8 is objected to for improper multiple dependencies.

With regard to the objection to Claims 10-12 under 37 C.F.R. § 1.85(c), it is respectfully submitted that that objection is overcome by this amendment. It is therefore respectfully requested that this objection be withdrawn.

Regarding the rejection of Claims 1, 3, 7, and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kawaguchi in view of Leung, that rejection is respectfully traversed.

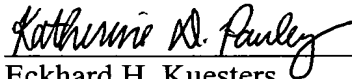
Independent Claims 1 and 3, from which Claims 7 and 9 depend in part, have been amended to include the allowable subject matter of Claim 6. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of Claims 1, 3, 7, and 9 be withdrawn.

Additionally, Applicants respectfully submit that the objection to Claim 8 has been overcome by the present amendment, and it is respectfully requested that the objection be withdrawn.

Consequently, in view of the foregoing discussion and present amendments, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. An early and favorable action is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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